

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SAIGON 07722 031154 Z

47

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 EUR-25 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-12 IO-12 DPW-01 AID-20 RSR-01 /140 W
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R 031115 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1113

INFO USDEL JEC PARIS

S E C R E T SAIGON 7722

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: MOPS MILI VS

SUBJECT: CONFIRMATION OF ACCOMMODATION IN WESTERN PLEIKU PROVINCE

FOL TEL SENT ACTION SAIGON FROM NHA TRANG DATED MAY 1, 1973
RPTD TO YOU FOR YOUR INFO

QUOTE S E C R E T NHA TRANG 0456

REFS: A. NHA TRANG 0410, REPEATED AS SAIGON 7188
B. NHA TRANG 0442, WEEKLY OVERVIET APRIL 22-28
C. NHA TRANG 0446, APRIL 30 SIT REP

1. SUMMARY: PLEIKU POLOFF HAS CONFIRMED THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF A DE FACTO DEMARCATION LINE BETWEEN FORCES OF THE OPPOSING
SIDES IN THE THANH GIAO/ PLEI YIT AREA OF THANH AN DISTRICT. IT
IS DIFFICULT TO ESTIMATE AT THIS TIME HOW LONG THE LINE IS LIKELY
TO ENDURE. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING VISIT TO THANH AN DISTRICT SOUTHWEST OF PLEIKU CITY
APRIL 30, PLEIKU POLOFF WAS ABLE TO CONFIRM REPORT (REF B) THAT
THE ZA 02 GRID LINE RUNNING NORTH AND SOUTH BETWEEN COMMUNIST-
CONTROLLED THANH GIAO VILLAGE (YA983 . 294) AND ARVN RANGER HQ
(APPROX ZA 03.30) IN THE VICINITY OF PLEI YIT IS BEING OBSERVED AS
" LINE OF DEMARCATION" BETWEEN OPPOSING FORCES ALONG QL-19.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 SAIGON 07722 031154 Z

3. RANGER OFFICERS AND OTHER SOURCES IN THE AREA REFERRED TO ZA 02 LINE (WHICH WAS TRACED ACROSS SOME OF THEIR MAP OVERLAYS) AS A " DE FACTO DEMARCATION LINE." THEY WOULD NOT ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THIS LINE HAD BEEN AGREED UPON IN RADIO EXCHANGES AND/ OR FACE- TO- FACE MEETINGS BETWEEN RANGER OFFICERS AND COMMUNIST FORCES IN THE VICINITY. HOWEVER, ON BASIS OF EARLIER STATEMENTS BY ARVN 23 RD DIVISION COMMANDER (THE " UNUSUALLY RELIABLE SOURCE" CITED REF B) TO KONTUM POLOFF, WE HAVE LITTLE DOUBT THAT AGREEMENT WAS IN FACT REACHED THROUGH SUCH MEANS.

4. PLEIKU POLOFF' S SOURCES LIKEWISE CLAIMED TO HAVE NO IDEA HOW LONG THE " DEMARCATION LINE" WOULD REMAIN IN FORCE, BUT THEY MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY WOULD OBSERVE THE LINE UNTIL THEY RECEIVED ORDERS TO THE CONTRARY.

5. THE MR 2 COMMANDER, MAJ. GEN TOAN, IS ALMOST CERTAINLY AWARE OF THIS ACCOMMODATION, BUT IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER HE HAS FORMALLY RATIFIED IT OR IS SIMPLY TOLERATING IT FOR THE TIME BEING. NOR, AS SUGGESTED REF B, IS IT CLEAR WHETHER TOAN HAS A CONSISTENT POLICY TOWARD THE CONDUCT OF EXCHANGES WITH THE OTHER SIDE IN GENERAL OR TOWARD AGREEMENTS THAT MAY RESULT FROM SUCH EXCHANGES.

6. AS REPORTED REF A, TOAN EARLIER EXPRESSED INTENT TO MAINTAIN MILITARY PRESSURE AGAINST THE NVA/ VC IN THIS AREA AND MORE THAN TWO WEEKS AGO SENT ELEMENTS OF THE 45 TH ARVN REGIMENT (CURRENTLY TWO BATTALIONS MINUS) TO AUGMENT THE 22 ND RANGER GROUP IN THE PLEI YIT AREA. IN ADDITION, THE 21 ST RANGER GROUP WAS PULLED OFF GUARD DUTY ALONG QL-14 IN THE CHU PAO PASS AREA AND MOVED TO THANH AN DISTRICT MORE THAN TEN DAYS AGO. ACCORDING TO EARLIER INFORMATION, 21 ST WAS TO HAVE REPLACED THE 22 ND IN FORWARD POSITIONS NEAR PLEI YIT SOMETIME LAST WEEK, WHILE THE 22 ND -- WHICH TOOK NUMEROUS CASUALTIES FROM ENEMY ATTACKS IN MARCH AND EARLY APRIL -- RETURNED TO PLEIKU CITY FOR REST AND RETRAINING. HOWEVER, THIS SHIFT OF RANGER GROUPS WAS DELAYED FOR UNKNOWN REASONS AND HAD NOT TAKEN PLACE AS OF APRIL 30. (POLOFF GOT SOME INDICATIONS THAT IT MIGHT TAKE PLACE TODAY, MAY 1.)

7. MEANWHILE, AS REPORTED REF C, ICCS REGION 3 HQ IN PLEIKU HAS OBTAINED PERMISSION FROM SAIGON HQ TO TRAVEL BY ROAD BETWEEN PLEIKU CITY AND THE COMMUNIST- CONTROLLED ENTRY- POINT AT DUC CO, A
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 SAIGON 07722 031154 Z

TRIP THAT WOULD INVOLVE CROSSING THE ZA 02 DEMARCATION LINE. NEXT STEP WILL PRESUMABLY BE FOR ICCS IN PLEIKU TO APPROACH THE TWO SIDES FOR PERMISSION ACTUALLY TO UNDERTAKE SUCH TRAVEL. IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO SEE HOW THE TWO SIDES REACT TO SUCH A REQUEST FROM THE ICCS.

8. THANH GIAO/ PLEI YIT REMAINS GENERALLY QUIET, AS IT HAS BEEN SINCE APRIL 5. WITH ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ZA 02 DEMCARCATION LINE, NVA/ VC HAVE GOTTEN ESSENTIALLY WHAT THEY ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE WANTED (REF A, PARA 5 AND 8). IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER GVN WILL REMAIN CONTENT FOR VERY LONG WITH PRESENT SITUATION. IF FUTURE GVN ACTION IN THAT AREA IS CONSISTENT WITH TACTICS GENERALLY USED ELSEWHERE IN MR 2 SINCE CEASE- FIRE, GVN WILL LET THE THANH AN SITUATION BECOME STABILIZED. ENGLE UNQUOTE
BUNKER

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